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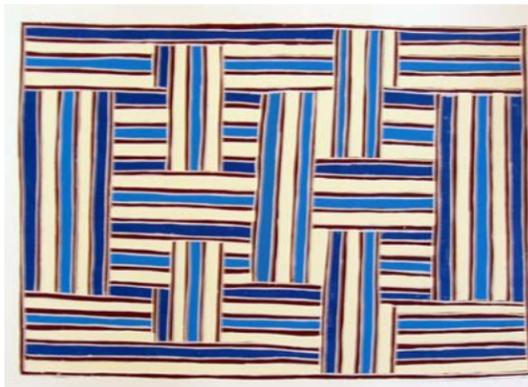
A Busy Fall

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Banduk Marika, (Yirrkala)
"Miyntjinharra," screenprint, 24" x 36"

Booker-Lowe Gallery

Gallery Hours:
11 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
Wednesday – Saturday

or please call us at 713.880.1541
or email us at info@bookerlowegallery.com
to arrange a time that fits *your* schedule.

www.bookerlowegallery.com

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Coming to Booker-Lowe Gallery...

True North: Linocuts and Etchings from Australia's 'Top End'

Saturday, 15 November 2008 until
Saturday, 11 January 2009
Open House at Booker-Lowe Gallery
Saturday, 15 November
11 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Gallery talk by Houston master printer
Dan Mitchell Allison at 3:00 p.m.

Encounters Bartok Concert

Thursday, 4 December
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Aboriginal art collector and Houston Symphony violinist, Sergiu Luca, established Context, a unique chamber music organization, fourteen years ago. The Encounters evening is a preview of the group's December concert at Rice.

Holiday Open House

Saturday, 6 December
10 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Australian art gifts are always appropriate. Whatever your budget -- beads, baskets, carvings, paintings, prints or gift certificates are great "green" gifts!



Booker • Lowe Gallery

contemporary and aboriginal fine art of Australia

Winter 2008-2009

True North Linocuts and Etchings by indigenous artists from Australia's "Top End"

By Patricia Covo Johnson *

At the dawn of the 21st century, the Elders of Mua, one of the largest of the more than 100 islands comprising the Torres Strait Islands north of the Australian mainland, established the Mualgau Minalar print studio with four artists: Dennis Nona, Billy Missi, David Bosun and Victor Motlop. The young men had backgrounds in formal art schools. They were also skilled at carving masks and other ritual objects that were part of their Aboriginal homeland. Printmaking was a natural extension of their art making, and, importantly, a way to preserve the culture of "The Top End", as Australians call the northern coastal region of the continent and surrounding waters, including the Torres Strait.

True North: Linocuts and Etchings by indigenous artists from Australia's Top End features prints by Dennis Nona, David Bosun and colleague Alick Tipoti. *Mualgau*, explains Nana Booker, the gallery's co-owner and honorary consul of Australia in Texas, is the name of the Mua Island's people, and *minalar* means decoration.

Through images that are simultaneously bold, complex and lyrical, the artists tell stories of land and legacy and belief. Creatures like manatees, turtles and lobsters, gulls, witches and human beings, populate the works and make visible their world both mythic and real. "When I work late at night carving traditional designs, I can sense the presence of the spirits," states 33-year-old Alick Tipoti. "I verbally acknowledge and thank (them) in language for their guidance and help in visualizing the words they have given me."

Their medium is linocuts. The soft surface of the linoleum block allows the artist to cut designs in any direction with great precision, and to marry intricate patterning with sharply defined silhouettes. The artists incorporate subtle gradations of color traditionally known as a rainbow roll, that they renamed "kaidaral" - literally "spirit that creates ripples on the surface of the water." The results are kaleidoscopic sophistication.

The dense patterning is characteristic of traditional Aboriginal art, but in these prints, the artists reveal themselves as contemporary and experimental as their work is specific to the geography and mythology of their ancestry.

Dennis Nona, born in 1973, pioneered the Torres Strait printmaking we enjoy today. He favors eccentric shapes that are almost sculptural on the page, and uses color sparingly in compositions about ancestral myths and traditions. In the example of *Wati Kisai/Bad Moon*, the central form is a circle with sharp-edged winged spirits extending from the undulating periphery. Crouching inside are six carefully delineated figures. The artist said he remembers that, as a child,



Dennis Nona
"Wati Kisai" (Bad Moon), etching, 21" x 26"

The artist said he remembers that, as a child, adults would cover his head during a full moon to protect him from its damaging rays.

Why a newsletter?

In the digital age, why is Booker-Lowe launching a printed newsletter? While the newsletter will also be available on our website, www.bookerlowegallery.com, many of our clients and guests tell us they enjoy receiving printed information. The newsletter will cover current and coming shows, news from the world of Aboriginal art, and a calendar of Australia-related arts events in our area.

* We are delighted that longtime Houston Chronicle arts writer Patricia Johnson is compiling and editing our feature stories. Her knowledge of art and writing skills are legendary!

We welcome your feedback; feel free to email us at bookerlowegallery@comcast.net or to call us at 713.880.1541 with your ideas or suggestions.

The Aboriginal Benefits Fund

You may have noticed on our postcards that Booker-Lowe donates a percentage of sales to the Aboriginal Benefits Fund. ABF was organized by Aboriginal art experts, including gallery owners in Australia, to assist indigenous communities. Booker-Lowe is proud to support ABF, whose first project is the development of a new health facility in Yirrkala. We have visited Yirrkala, which has one of the leading art and culture centers in Arnhem Land, several times.

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Booker•Lowe Gallery

contemporary and aboriginal fine art of Australia

4623 Feagan Street
Houston, Texas 77007 USA



Alick Tipoti, "Waru Thurul" (Turtle Tracks),
hand coloured linocut, 22" x 30"

This Fall at the Gallery...

"CrIKeY!" Hurricane Benefit

Since our opening for "Earth Colors Recaptured: New Paintings by Aboriginal Artists of Waringarri" was delayed due to Hurricane Ike, we opted to host an "artful" benefit for storm victims, on the 21st of September. Somehow, the Aussie slang word, "crikey," seemed appropriate! Thanks to every one who came with much-needed items, and to Houston Chronicle arts writer Douglas Britt for his great article about the opening. We also owe a special thanks to those who bought artwork between September 21st and October 15th; the gallery donated a percentage of all those sales to the Gulf Coast Hurricane Relief Fund.

The International Market for Aboriginal Art

Since its origins in the 1970s, the market for contemporary Aboriginal fine art has grown exponentially in value. One of the important barometers for this market is the annual Sotheby's auction, held in late October. The 2008 sale clearly reflected uneasiness in the worldwide art marketplace, with total revenues significantly below the record-breaking sales of the last several years.

It's important to remember that this auction did not offer the kind of block-buster paintings that generated enormous attention in 2007 when Sotheby's sold a Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri work, owned by a collector-friend of ours, for \$2.4 million! Just two months earlier, a painting by Emily Kngwarreye had broken the million-dollar mark for an Aboriginal artwork, selling for \$1.4 million.

Compared to comparable contemporary art, Aboriginal art is still an exceptional value and we believe quality paintings by well-known artists will increase in value over time. Since art is not as liquid as stocks or bonds, we encourage you to acquire art because of its aesthetic and cultural values, rather than as a critical part of your investment portfolio.

...True North continued from page 1

adults would cover his head during a full moon to protect him from its damaging rays.

David Bosun's stark black-and-white prints are inspired by nature. A 35-year-old native of Mua Island, he believes that "future generations in Torres Strait (and) throughout the world need to be educated about the rich cultural heritage and distinctiveness of Torres Strait culture."

In the nearly abstract *Zagu Dhangal*, he describes the dugong - manatee - which is central to Torres Strait Islanders' creation myths, with sharp geometric shapes fitted together like a puzzle. It leaves a trail behind as it slices across waves. This print, Bosun explains, "depicts a dugong feeding at night, glowing as it comes up to the surface."

Alick Tipoti similarly feels that his responsibility is to document the culture of his homeland so it will be available to future generations. His prints typically have a strong graphic background of decorative designs against which he portrays life of the sea. In *Kaiyara Kula*, which refers to a rock reef, the black-and-white background is an intricate lace that enhances the bold silhouettes of rock lobsters. In the more symbolic *Waru Thurul*, the protagonist is a large turtle, its simplified and delicately toned shape cast against an elaborate background inhabited by animal and human predators.

In addition to prints by Nona, Bosun, and Tipoti, True North includes etchings by Yolgnu artists from Yirkkala on the coast of northeastern Arnhem Land, across the Gulf of Carpentaria from the Torres Strait Islands. Like the islanders, the Yolgnu had contact with fishermen and sailors from Indonesia and Papuan New Guinea, but developed quite different traditions and complex mythologies.

The words of author T. Williams seem especially appropriate for this exhibition: "Magicians give you illusions as truth. I give you truths in the pleasant disguise of illusion."



Daisy Bitting

"Legune Station," natural ochres on canvas, 12" x 16"

Earth Colors Recaptured, our recent show, featured ochre paintings from the Kimberley-area art centre, Waringarri. The artists say they "paint country with country," using all natural pigments. Booker-Lowe maintains a stock of the bold, contemporary canvases from this outstanding group of painters.

John McVeigh Jewelry Benefit

On September 28th, John McVeigh, a much-in-demand opera singer and talented designer, showed his signature jewelry to benefit Bering Omega's AIDS hospice. See John's finely-crafted work at www.johnmcveighdesigns.com.

Featured Artist: Dennis Nona

by Patricia Covo Johnson *

Dennis Nona learned traditional wood carving as a child on Badu Island. By the time he was 16 in 1973, he had begun to develop skills that ultimately led to pioneering the linocut and kaidaral prints unique to the Torres Strait Islands.

The artist "sits there with a lot of (linoleum blocks) and with a very sharp little chisel cuts out incredibly detailed little lines and gouge marks," said Roger Butler, curator of Australian prints at the National Gallery of Australia. Nona, Butler added, is taking the simple technique "back to Renaissance master Albrecht Durer to make very complex images."

Nona holds diplomas from various institutions, among them a diploma in printmaking from the Australia National University in Canberra, and nears completion of a Master of Arts degree from Queensland College of Art in Brisbane. He began exhibiting in group shows in 1991 and has since participated in more than 25 group and 20 solo exhibits across Australia, in Berlin and in Paris.

He blends graphic design and powerful symbols to transform the legends and myths that have been passed down through generations in the form of storytelling and dance, into illustrated mini-documents, enhancing their drama by couching images in eccentric shapes. In *Wati Kisai (Bad Moon)*, one of the prints he exhibits now at Booker-Lowe Gallery, we learn of the danger of looking at a full moon, a fearsome orb with protruding, sharp-edged rays.

He tells about fishing techniques in the elegant *Gapu Dhangal (Sucker Fish and Dugong)*, describing the ocean-faring dugong (manatee) as an independent image, escaping from its pursuers just behind.

The compelling story describes a traditional way of hunting for dugongs in the western Torres Straits Islands: A sucker fish tied to a rope will attach itself to the dugong, and lead the fishermen to their prey.

As one commentator wrote, "The force of Dennis Nona's extraordinary art is its capacity to breathe life into the retelling of (these) legendary stories."

Australia in the Arts

Gelam Nguzu Kazi – Dugong My Son

Thursday, 13 November –
Saturday, 20 December 2008
Houston Museum of Printing History
1324 West Clay Street

MPH is one of just three U.S. hosts for this traveling exhibition, which includes prints by four internationally-acclaimed artists from the Torres Strait Islands.

Australia starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman Opens at movie theaters Wednesday, 26 November

The long-awaited epic film is featured in the November issue of **Travel and Leisure**, with a photo of Waringarri artist, Daisy Bitting and one of her paintings. Daisy was a featured artist in our Earth Colors Recaptured show.



Dennis Nona

"Warti Dhogai" (Witch), etching, 14" x 26"

G'Day, USA! Australia Week Houston

The program started in LA five years ago, then spread to NY. Now, it's coming to Houston, with a variety of events, including:

Grounded: Contemporary Works by Australian Aboriginal Artists

Thursday, 15 January – Friday, 20 February 2009
Williams Tower
2800 Post Oak Blvd.

The opening reception, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Thursday, 15 January, of this survey show of Aboriginal art, curated by Sally Sprout, will kick-off Australia Week Houston.

A Midsummer Night's Dream Houston Grand Opera

Friday, 23 January – Friday, 6 February 2009
Wortham Theater Center
501 Texas Avenue

This "Dream" is directed by acclaimed Aussie Neil Armfield.

Tracks: New Works by Leading and Emerging Artists of Yuendumu

Wednesday, 28 January – Thursday, 12 March 2009
Opening Reception: 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Booker-Lowe Gallery

Warlukurlagmu Arts Centre director Cecilia Alfonso and artists from Yuendumu are planning to attend the opening!

For more information about Australia Week, check the Australian American Chamber website, www.aacc-houston.org, or ours, www.bookerlowegallery.com.